(xiii) The specifications of rail steel have been upgraded and are *in* conformity with the International Union of Railways (UIC) specifications.

(xiv) The track structure is upgraded on a planned basis.

(xv) To keep the track in good condition, track renewals are carried out whenever they become due subject to availability of funds.

(xvi) Derailment prone four wheeler wagons (CRT wagons) are being phased out of service.

(xvii) Closer liaison is being maintained with the State Police Departments, wherever required for prevention of crime on Railway tracks and bridges.

(xviii) Instructions have been issued to reduce the number of fish plated joints, wherever feasible and for burring of two fish bolts, one on each rail, at joints located in the stretches considered vulnerable.

(xix) An anti-theft elastic rail clip and fish bolt fastening is under development.

(xx) Stringent penalty to the extent of dismissal/removal from service is being imposed on officials causing serious accidents.

Bridge Over Kosi River

1821. PROF. RAM DEO BHANDARY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Railways propose to construct a bridge over river Kosi in connection with restoration of Nirmali-Saraigarh line;

(b) if so, the effective steps taken by Government 'or the construction of this bridge which is a long pending issue; and

(c) the time by which it is likely to be taken and amount involved in this project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) to (c) The work of construction of mega bridge over river Kosi with link lines between Nirmali and Bhaptiahi (Saraigarh) has been included in the Railway Budget 2003-2004 at an

anticipated cost of Rs. 323.41 crore as a part of 'National Rail Vikas Yojana'. An outlay of Rs. 10 crore has been proposed for the work during 2003-2004. The work would be taken up once the Budget is passed by the Parliament.

Gauge conversion under Unigauge scheme

1822. DR. AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the zone-wise total length of the railway lines still to be converted into broad gauge under the Unigauge scheme, indicating zone-wise conversion so far made, under the scheme;

(b) the total estimated cost of the Unigauge conversion scheme, phase-wise; and the expenditure already incurred thereon; and the cost escalation already suffered under the scheme; and

(c) the details of conversion programme still to be implemented and the estimated cost thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) The zone-wise details of total length of Railway lines identified for conversion under Unigauge, which are still to be converted, alongwith the lines converted upto 31.3.2002, are as under

Railway	Kms converted upto 31.3.2002	Identified km still to be converted
Central	144	287
Northern	1398	1521
North Eastern	1196	2264
Northeast Frontier	829	939
Southern	1932	1721
South Central	1982	1429
South Eastern	318	818
Western	1201	1268

(b). The total estimated cost of the Unigauge conversion scheme would be known only when detailed survey of all the lines to be converted